

SPECIAL EDUCATION GUIDELINES

ARIZONA STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ALL STUDENTS

[if you have questions, contact the Academic Standards and Accountability Division at (602) 542-5031]

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) believes:

- that curriculum, instruction, and assessment must be inclusive and equitable for all students in every district and school;
- that the Arizona Academic Standards provide the foundation for curriculum, instruction, and assessment in our state; and
- assessment must mirror student instruction as much as possible.

Arizona is instituting a comprehensive, statewide system for assessing achievement of **all** students on the Arizona Academic Standards. All students, regardless of disability or group membership, will be instructed in accordance with the Arizona Academic Standards, and will be assessed with a variety of state assessment instruments. This is a major step for Arizona's schools toward a comprehensive accountability system that will include ALL students in both district and statewide assessment programs.

- ☐ Increasing the academic achievement of **EVERY** student must become a common goal for all schools
- ☐ **ALL** students must be given the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and are able to do
- ☐ **EACH** student can benefit from instructional changes and educational reforms that are implemented in response to information based on assessment results

The First Step Toward A Statewide Accountability System

All students, including those with disabilities and limited-English proficiency, have the legal right to be included in accountability systems and to be part of the basis for policy decisions that affect them. A framework of federal and state laws requires that students be assessed with a variety of state tests and assessments, including the Stanford Achievement Test (9th Edition) and Arizona's Instrument to Measure Standards (AIMS). If the purpose of Arizona's statewide assessment is to describe the status of students' knowledge, then it is critical that the performance of ALL students be included.

Adaptations may now be used for students who, in the past, would have been excluded from statewide testing. However, **ONLY** the specific adaptations necessary for each individual student in a particular content area shall be used. For example, a student may need an accommodation in reading but not in mathematics. Additionally, adaptations may differ by state test instrument (i.e., Stanford 9 v. AIMS).

*Adopted 1/25/99
Amended 5/10/00
Updated 3/11/03*

The only exemption from state tests will be for those students (probably only one to two percent of the total student population) whose Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) exempt them from participating in standardized testing programs, even with adaptations available. These students have disabilities so significant that they cannot participate meaningfully in traditional assessment. An alternate assessment (AIMS-A) has been constructed by the state, in accordance with state and federal guidelines, for these students as required by their IEPs.

Decisions about providing adaptations and/or exempting a student from part or all of a state administered test must be clearly documented on that student's IEP. A student's Section 504 Accommodation Plan may specify accommodations only. These decisions must be based on each individual student's needs; they should be neither disability specific nor based on performance expectations or reporting predictions.

Testing Students With Disabilities

The ADE Exceptional Students Services (ESS) Division exists for the purpose of assisting schools, districts, and parents ensure students with disabilities reach higher levels of academic achievement. Ultimately all students in Arizona will need to pass a battery of graduation exams (AIMS) to receive a diploma. To this end, ESS Division has initiated a system of technical assistance and training to ensure student progress on the Arizona Academic Standards.

Students with disabilities have the legal right to be included in accountability systems and to be part of the basis for policy decisions that affect them. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires that a student's IEP include a statement of any individual accommodations the student will need to participate in state and district-wide assessment programs. States must assess students with disabilities in the regular state assessment, with accommodations provided, when necessary. Federal law under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act concurs with this information.

If the purpose of Arizona's statewide assessment is to describe the status of students' knowledge, then it is critical that the performance of ALL students be included. To achieve this goal, a system of reasonable adaptations are specified in this document. Students exempted from participation in the regular assessment must be provided with an alternate form of assessment.

WHAT ARE ADAPTATIONS, ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS?

Adaptations are changes made to the environment, curriculum, instruction, and/or assessment practices in order for a student to be a successful learner. Adaptations include *accommodations* and *modifications*. Adaptations are based on an individual student's strengths and needs.

Accommodations are provisions made in *how* a student accesses and demonstrates learning. These do not substantially change the instructional level, the content or the performance criteria. The changes are made in order to provide a student equal access to learning and equal opportunity to demonstrate what is known.

Modifications reflect changes in the test administration that affect standardization and, thus, the comparability of scores and may also involve substantial changes in what a student is expected to learn and to demonstrate. Changes may be made in the instructional level, the content or the performance criteria. Such changes are made to provide a student with meaningful and productive learning experiences, environments, and assessments based on individual needs and abilities.

GUIDELINES FOR MAKING DECISIONS ABOUT ADAPTATIONS

The following should be considered when assessing what accommodations are adaptations for students:

1. It is necessary to state clearly what all students are to know and be able to do before determining whether there is a need for a specific adaptation.
2. It is important to consider accommodations for both instruction and assessment. When students need accommodations in how they learn, they will usually need accommodations in how they are assessed.
3. Accommodations must be determined for each student based on his/her individual strengths, needs and immediate context. Students who require accommodations in one area may need none in another area.
4. The more intense the student's needs, the more likely it is that he/she will need an accommodation.

Administering the Stanford 9 to Disabled Students

The Stanford 9 is a standardized norm-referenced test. Much of the information derived from the Stanford 9 is meaningful only if the test is administered in a standardized manner. When administration differs from standardization criteria, interpretation of the results is often problematic. Because of this, the Stanford 9 should be administered according to the publisher's guidelines when it is possible. When adaptations are necessary, they should be applied with care.

Adaptations vary in whether or not they significantly impact score interpretation. Adaptations that impact score interpretation (modifications) require special coding on the student answer document in order to prevent scores from being aggregated in school, district, and state totals. A list of adaptations that do not interfere with standardized administration of the test (Accommodations - List B), and, therefore, do not affect score interpretation and data aggregation is also presented.

LIST A

Modifications Requiring Special Coding

The following are examples of modifications that may be used in the administration of the Stanford 9. These modifications require the use of a special scoring code for test administration. Any modification used in test administration **MUST BE REQUIRED IN THE STUDENT'S IEP** and should correlate with adaptations required by the student during instruction.

<input type="checkbox"/> Follow flexible schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Extend time <input type="checkbox"/> Administer test in several shorter sessions <input type="checkbox"/> Administer test over several extra days	<input type="checkbox"/> Underline/highlight verbs in directions <input type="checkbox"/> Provide additional examples <input type="checkbox"/> Simplify language in directions
<input type="checkbox"/> Give prompts/directions on tape <input type="checkbox"/> Increase size of answer bubbles <input type="checkbox"/> Have computer read test to student <input type="checkbox"/> Have teacher provide clarification <input type="checkbox"/> Provide STOP or arrow cues	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide graph paper <input type="checkbox"/> Provide word processor or typewriter <input type="checkbox"/> Provide calculator, abacus, arithmetic tables <input type="checkbox"/> Provide dictionary, spell checker <input type="checkbox"/> Out-of-level testing

OUT-OF-LEVEL TESTING

Out-of level testing can be done only if the student's IEP requires this modification. State law, A.R.S. § 15-741.A.8, requires students to be tested "at a level appropriate to their grade level." This is consistent with IDEA, which requires challenging state standards to be applied to all students. The intent of both federal and state law is to ensure that the same expectations apply to students with disabilities as apply to all other students.

Using a different level of the Stanford 9 for a student is a modification of the content being assessed, not an accommodation. This significant modification must be documented on the student's IEP. The decision to administer a lower level of the standardized test must be based upon the student's individual needs and abilities. This decision should better enable us to determine the progress the student is making toward achievement of the state standards.

CODING STANFORD 9 ANSWER DOCUMENTS

Teachers or Building Coordinators are responsible for completing the coding required in the OTHER INFORMATION field of the Identification Grid on the student answer document.

- One of the numbers must be gridded in column J to identify the domain(s) to which the modification pertains.

Bubble Position	Domain(s) Modified
1	Reading
2	Mathematics
3	Language
4	Reading AND Mathematics
5	Reading AND Language
6	Mathematics AND Language
7	Reading AND Mathematics AND Language
8	Home Schooled Student

- Items 1-7 above pertain only to students who have modifications from List A or are being tested at a lower level. **If a student has one or more accommodations from List B (see page 4), leave column J blank on that student's bubble sheet since accommodations do not require special coding.**

It is **very important** that the coding for each student be done accurately since these data will be used to determine which of the student's scores will or will not be included in the score summary reports.

LIST B

Accommodations Not Requiring Special Coding

The following accommodations may be used, if appropriate, in the administration of the Stanford 9 without requiring the use of a special scoring code, IF all other provisions of the administration are in accordance with the test developer's directions. Accommodations used in test administration should be similar to accommodations required by the student during instruction.

List B: Accommodations NOT Requiring Special Coding	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Change time of day for administration <input type="checkbox"/> Provide special lighting or acoustics <input type="checkbox"/> Secure paper to work area with tape, magnet <input type="checkbox"/> Provide adaptive or special furniture <input type="checkbox"/> Provide slant board or wedge <input type="checkbox"/> Administer test individually in separate location <input type="checkbox"/> Administer test in small group <input type="checkbox"/> Allow frequent breaks during testing <input type="checkbox"/> Mark answers in test booklet <input type="checkbox"/> Provide markers to maintain place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide templates to reduce visible print <input type="checkbox"/> Provide visual magnification devices <input type="checkbox"/> Provide pencil grip <input type="checkbox"/> Provide auditory amplification devices or noise buffers <input type="checkbox"/> Sign oral directions using exact translation <input type="checkbox"/> Provide scribe/tape recorder to record answers <input type="checkbox"/> Provide large-diameter pencil <input type="checkbox"/> Sign or read written directions to student <input type="checkbox"/> Reread directions for each page

This list of accommodations is not exhaustive, and the IEP or IAP team must make the determination of the type of accommodations needed, if any. Accommodations must not alter the content of the test or provide inappropriate assistance to the student within the context of the test. For example, a test of reading skills may not be read to the student, and a calculator may not be used on a test of mathematics calculation skills.

Administering AIMS to Disabled Students

Since AIMS is closely tied to instruction, the administration of the test should likewise mirror the instructional environment. To this end, all reasonable adaptations specified in a student's IEP shall be provided during the administration of AIMS. A student's Section 504 Accommodation Plan may specify accommodations only. Examples of reasonable accommodations have been specified in the previous section, "Administering the Stanford 9 to Disabled Students." (Extend Time from List A does not apply to AIMS.)

OUT-OF-LEVEL TESTING

Using a lower level of AIMS is allowed only if the student's IEP specifically requires such. General statements about grade level ability are not sufficient to justify the administration of a lower level of AIMS. The decision to administer a lower level of the standardized test must be based upon the student's individual needs and abilities. AIMS should match the level of instruction the student is receiving (i.e., foundations, low essentials, high essentials). This decision should better enable us to determine the progress the student is making toward achievement of the state standards at the proficiency level.

AIMS CODING REQUIREMENTS (SPRING 2003)

All students receiving special education services must be identified by gridding the Special Education bubble in Number 7 – Special Program Membership on the answer document. The disability must be identified in Number 12 – Disabilities by gridding in the appropriate bubble.

Using the chart below, grid the bubble in Column J that corresponds to the modification stated in the IEP and that was provided on an AIMS subtest.

Column J	DOMAIN
1	Modification in reading
2	Modification in mathematics
3	Modification in writing
4	Modification in reading and mathematics
5	Modification in reading and writing
6	Modification in mathematics and writing
7	Modification in reading, mathematics, and writing
8	Home schooled student tested at your school

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENT

All students will have the opportunity to be tested on the Arizona Academic Standards. Achieving "Meets the Standard" on AIMS is required for the class/cohort of 2006. Students with disabilities shall be tested at a level that is appropriate to each student's need. If the proficiency level of the Arizona Academic Standards is not appropriate for a student with disabilities, their IEP must specifically define what level is appropriate for graduation. Upon completion of the testing requirement appropriate to the student, as defined in the student's IEP, the student will be eligible for a diploma. Student transcripts will reflect the level of test which the student passed.

TEST ADMINISTRATION

To ensure test security, all administration guidelines must be strictly adhered to. Specific guidelines on how student answer folders shall be coded and other data reporting are

forthcoming. Procedures will be part of the test administration guidelines disseminated later this year and will be incorporated in the training provided at the pretest workshops.

QUESTIONS?

Questions regarding the administration AIMS and the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition, may be addressed to Dr. Paul Young at pyoung@ade.az.gov or 602-542-5031.